They Say There Is A Land · (1923)

יאי ואלט

they say there is a land,
A land drenched in sun...
Where is this sun?
Where is this land?
A land drenched in sun…

They are the Maccabees!

All of Israel is holy,
The Rabbi says:
Akiva answers him,
Where is the Maccabee?
Where are they, the holy ones?
Peace to you, Rabbi!
Peace to you, Akiva!
Has met with Akiva.
Everyone who enters –
What everyone had hoped for,
A land where shall come to pass,
Springing up on every hill.
Seven planets,
Its pillars are seven,
They say there is a land,
Where is this sun?
Where is this land?
A land drenched in sun…

Under Little Sarah’s Cradle · (1914)

Anatszer Shulekh Vinitel

Under little Sarah’s cradle
Sits a little white goat,
The little goat has gone off to sell
Raisins and almonds.
The groom will study Torah.
What’s the best merchandise,
Raisins and almonds.

Lullaby · (1921)

Mikhtavim Be-Meir

In the meadow there stands a little tree;
It has green branches.
On one there sits a little bird;
It closes its little eyes.

On the green branches
Grows a golden apple.
Close your eyes, my child,
A blessing on your head.

On the green branches
The birds are already asleep.
Their mother sings to them: a, a, a, . . .
It’s a quiet night: a, a, a, . . .

The Song of Songs · (1926)

La Shira Sheva

The Song of Songs, by Solomon.
Oh, give me of the kisses of your mouth,
For your love is more delightful than wine.
Your ointments yield a sweet fragrance,
Your name is like finest oil—
Therefore do maidens love you.
Draw me after you, let us run!
The king has brought me to his chambers.
Let us delight and rejoice in your love,
Savoring it more than wine—
Like new wine they love you!

Concert Performers:
ELIZA BAGG (voice) · MICHAEL COMPITELLO (percussion) · HANNAH LEVINSON (violin)
MAYA BENNARDO (viola) · HANNAH COLLINS (cello) · DANIEL SCHLOSBERG (piano)

Illustrations: [top] M. Milner, from the sheet music cover, vocal suite, 10 Children’s Songs for singer and piano, words by Y.L. Peretz, 1921. YIVO Archives. [bottom] J. Engel, from the sheet music cover, Jewish Folksongs, 1909. YIVO Archives.

This page contains images of sheet music covers and concert information. The text is a mixture of Hebrew and Yiddish, with some English translations provided.
and all the days were purple

My Joy
Music by ALEX WEISER (b. 1989)
Text by ANNA MARGOLIN · (1887-1952)  ·
Translation by Shirley Kumove

Perhaps this was my happiness:
to feel how your eyes
bowed down before me.
No, rather this was my happiness:
to go silently back and forth
across the square with you.
No, not even that, but listen:
how over our joy
there hovered the smiling face of death.

I Was Never Able To Pray
Music by ALEX WEISER
Text by EDWARD HIRSCH (b. 1950)

Wheel me down to the shore
where the lighthouse was abandoned
and the moon tolls in the rafters.
Let me hear the wind paging through the trees
and see the stars flaring out, one by one,
like the forgotten faces of the dead.
I was never able to pray,
but let me inscribe my name
in the book of waves
and then stare into the dome
of a sky that never ends
and see my voice sail into the night.

Longing
Music by ALEX WEISER
Text by RACHEL KORN · (1898-1982)  ·
Translation by Ruth Whitman

My dreams are so full of longing
that every morning
my body smells of you -
and on my bitten lip
there slowly dries
the only sign of suffering,
a speck of blood.
And the hours like goblets pour hope,
one into the other,
like expensive wine:
that you're not far away,
that now, at any moment,
you may come, come, come.

Poetry
Music by ALEX WEISER
Text by ABRAHAM SUTZKEVER · (1913-2010)  ·
Translation by Chana Bloch

A dark violet plum,
the last one on the tree,
thin-skinned and delicate as the pupil of an eye,
that in the dew at night blots out
love, visions, shivering,
and then at the morning star the dew
Drows weightless: That
is poetry. Touch it so lightly
that you don't leave a fingerprint.